

MFN Elects Kurt Koenigsfest as New Chair

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The 16th Annual Conference of the MicroFinance Network (MFN), "Keeping Leadership in the Changing Environment," took place last week in Nairobi, Kenya, hosted by the Equity Bank. The issues discussed at the conference included how the MFN members are managing through the global financial crisis, how to avoid clients' over-indebtedness, business continuity planning in emergencies, and succession planning.

During the conference, the MFN General Assembly elected Kurt Koenigsfest, General Manager, BancoSol, as the new Chair, and also welcomed Mahabub Hossain, Executive Director, BRAC, as a new member of the Steering Committee. Mr. Koenigsfest replaces Carlos Labarthe, who served as the Network Chair for the past four years.

"I know that this comes as a personal challenge and at times of deep changes in the microfinance industry worldwide. I have the motivation to work with our network to make sure that we open the path for our organizations to grow, to innovate, to lend to the very poor, to respect our clients, and most of all, to give the people in our countries the opportunities that they never had," said Mr. Koenigsfest in his message to the members.

Mr. Koenigsfest is an active member of a number of banking and microfinance boards including ASOBAN (the Bolivian Private Banking Association), where he acts as Vice Chairman, AFIN (the Microfinance Training Institute of Bolivia), and ATC (credit and debit card processor). He was the Chairman of ASOFIN (Association of Regulated Microfinance Institutions of Bolivia) from 2004 to 2008, and today he is the Chairman of the ACCION Network. In 2006 he was elected as Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. A native of La Paz, he graduated in Business Administration from the University of North Texas, USA.